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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

CONTENTS

Page

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

United States of America 2

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[Original: English]

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1. With reference to General Assembly decision 47/422, the United States of America hereby communicates its views on the report of the Secretary-General entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold war era" (A/C.1/47/7).

2. The United States fully agrees with the basic premise of the report that the current, dramatically changed, international environment offers new opportunities for arms control and also poses new challenges. Over the years, the United States has frequently voiced concern about the discrepancy between the way the question of disarmament was approached by the international community, in particular in United Nations forums, and the evolving international realities. It therefore strongly endorses the Secretary-General's view that a reassessment of that approach is required and hopes his thoughtful report will inspire all Member States to render their arms control and disarmament agenda relevant to the international security problems of the real world of today.

3. The United States has always held that arms control and disarmament are instruments for enhancing national and international security and not an objective per se that can be viewed and pursued in isolation. As stressed by the Secretary-General, the links that exist between arms control and disarmament, on the one hand, and the political processes that shape international behaviour, on the other, are crucial to progress in the field of disarmament and the creation of a new system of international security. The United States fully agrees that the time has come for an integration of arms control and disarmament issues into the broader structure of the international peace and security agenda.

4. The United States notes with appreciation the Secretary-General's assessment of the nuclear-weapon reductions agreed to by the two major nuclear powers. They are indeed absolutely striking in scope. In this connection, it should be noted that the agreement reached last June between the United States and the Russian Federation, which would dramatically reduce their respective strategic nuclear arsenals to 3,500 warheads or below by the year 2003, as well as result in the elimination of all their multiple-warhead land-based missiles, has been formalized and signed as the START II Treaty. It should also be noted that in Europe significant achievements have been made in conventional arms control and arms reductions, as evidenced by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Stockholm Document and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), and that States participating in the CSCE process are engaged in further efforts in pursuit of enhanced stability and security in the CSCE area. These developments demonstrate that the disarmament and political processes are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

5. Against this background, the Secretary-General's call for a globalization of the arms control and disarmament process is particularly timely. The two major nuclear Powers and the countries of what many have called the most heavily armed area in the world have taken the lead. As disarmament is recognized to be the responsibility of all States, each of them should follow that lead and carry out its share of that collective responsibility, not by telling others what to do, but by taking appropriate, practical arms control and disarmament steps themselves. As the Secretary-General points out, the argument advanced by some States that the major military Powers should disarm first is too often used to avoid practical measures.

6. Like the Secretary-General, the United States has observed and is encouraged by a growing interest among States in regional approaches to arms control and confidence-building. Regrettably, however, this interest is not shared by all, and there is also evidence of continued, strenuous opposition to regional disarmament. It is generally acknowledged that measures in the field of disarmament are not transferable from one region to another, as regions differ in terms of their security needs and concerns. Thus, a global disarmament structure could not consist of a single set of measures equally applicable to all. If such a structure is to become a reality, States will have to provide for it building blocks so tailored as to enhance peace and security in their respective regions, while also contributing to international security at large.

7. In this context, as the Secretary-General points out, major attention should be devoted on the regional level to the question of conventional arms races and their destabilizing effects. This problem has long been neglected, and some have even been denying its existence, despite all the evidence of excessive accumulation of conventional arms in many parts of the world. Frequently, responsibility for such accumulation is placed on arms supplier States. While it is true that certain industrialized States now have arms production over-capacity and surplus equipment, it is also true that one cannot feed a market that is not hungry. Consequently, responsibility for imprudent, destabilizing arms transfers should be borne at least equally by the seller and the buyer, especially as it is primarily the buyer who must weigh the impact of arms acquisitions on the resources available for his country's socio-economic development and on stability in the region. The United States believes that the Secretary-General's suggestion for regional agreements as to what constitutes clearly excessive or threatening military capabilities merits serious consideration by the relevant States. For its part, conscious of its share of responsibility as an arms supplier for avoiding destabilizing arms transfers, the United States subjects all proposed arms exports to careful scrutiny and a strict licensing regime. At the United States initiative, talks have also been held among the major arms suppliers with a view to curbing exports of destabilizing arms, with particular focus on the Middle East. The United States stands by ready to support other appropriate efforts to stem destabilizing arms transfers.

8. As regards the Secretary-General's comments on the question of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban, last year a law was enacted in the United States which, inter alia, provides for a moratorium on nuclear testing by the United States through 30 June 1993; limits the number of tests after that date to five per fiscal year until 30 September 1996; and requires that the

Administration report to Congress on a plan for achieving a comprehensive ban on testing by the end of fiscal year 1996. President Clinton has informed Congress that his Administration is currently preparing a review of questions relating to the forum and modalities for negotiating a comprehensive test ban and the related question of resuming a limited programme of United States nuclear testing after 1 July 1993, as provided for under this legislation, and that he will submit the requisite report as soon as this review is complete.

9. As noted by the Secretary-General, the Security Council Summit, which took place in January 1992, declared that the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction constituted a threat to international peace and security. That declaration further emphasized the extreme importance of preventing proliferation and the need for supporting the efforts under way in appropriate forums in pursuit of that objective. The United States has supported and will continue to support such efforts with the utmost determination.

10. The Secretary-General's appreciation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as an indispensable framework for global non-proliferation efforts in the nuclear field is fully shared by the United States and, we believe, by a vast majority of other States. The United States strongly endorses the Secretary-General's call on all States to adhere to the Treaty and for its indefinite and unconditional extension in 1995. A positive response to this call of the Secretary-General by all members of the international community would constitute a contribution of undoubtedly historic significance to a safer future for mankind. The United States also agrees with the Secretary-General that the safeguards arrangements for the Treaty should be strengthened and is actively supporting efforts to that end in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

11. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction has now been signed by 138 States, and the Preparatory Commission has begun its work. The provisions banning the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons, and the unprecedented extent of the accompanying verification measures, are designed to ensure the elimination of such weapons where they now exist and also to prevent their emergence elsewhere. The United States deeply regrets that a minority of States, including some with the capability for producing these horrid weapons, have not yet signed the Convention. It hopes that they will do so soon and thus join the Secretary-General in the view that this Convention, along with universal adherence to the Biological Weapons Convention, is an indispensable element in global efforts to deal effectively with weapons of mass destruction.

12. The United States, with its long-standing tradition of openness, fully shares the Secretary-General's view that openness and transparency are of crucial importance to the process of building confidence, avoiding misinterpretation of intentions and enhancing the predictability of military behaviour, and also that openness and transparency are of special significance in the regional context. The value of confidence- and security-building measures has been dramatically demonstrated in Europe, although as noted earlier, the specific character of such measures is not automatically transferable from one region to another. The United States welcomes the apparent growing interest among States in the concept of confidence-building

measures, and particularly the actual implementation of such measures in several parts of the world. The United States strongly hopes that the adoption by the Disarmament Commission last year of guidelines for objective information on military matters was indicative of readiness on the part of an increasing number of States to undertake practical steps in this area. It will support appropriate efforts in that direction, including the development of confidence-building measures with specific regional application.

13. On the universal level, the international community has taken a significant step towards greater transparency by establishing the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The United States is gratified that the General Assembly, at its forty-seventh session, adopted, without a vote, a resolution endorsing the consensus report of the panel of governmental technical experts whose task was to develop technical procedures for the Register and to examine the modalities for its future expansion. The action by the General Assembly provides the Register with a strong foundation, as urged by the Secretary-General, but the actual effectiveness of the Register and its further development obviously will depend on the extent of participation in it by Member States. The United States appeals to all of them to provide to the Register their first data on arms transfers, as well as available background information on their military holdings, procurement through national production, and relevant policies by the established date of 30 April 1993.

14. As the Secretary-General points out, the new set of problems, such "post-disarmament issues" as conversion, safe storage and disposal of weapons subject to reduction, are very complex and can have significant financial implications. In some instances, those implications may be relatively long-term. At present, these problems directly affect only the limited number of States currently engaged in actual arms reduction. Given some misconceptions in the international community about the immediate scope of economic benefits of disarmament, however, the observations of the Secretary-General are a helpful reminder of realities in this regard.

15. In his report, the Secretary-General also addresses the question of disarmament machinery. On this question, the United States would like to make a number of observations.

16. The United States agrees that the disarmament machinery should meet the realities and priorities of our time. In other words, the machinery should be capable of effectively supporting the objectives identified and agreed upon by the international community. This implies that any reassessment of the United Nations disarmament machinery can be undertaken only in the context of a general appreciation of the current international security environment and its attendant arms control dimensions. While the report of the Secretary-General provides a very useful basis for it, common understanding in this regard has yet to be arrived at.

17. The effectiveness of any organizational machinery depends on how it is used. Unless Member States are determined to utilize the United Nations disarmament machinery in pursuit of realistic objectives, no reassessment of that machinery will help advance progress in disarmament.

18. In short, the United States' view is that a reassessment of the United Nations disarmament machinery would be premature in the absence of a general understanding of the new priorities in the field of disarmament and the most effective way of attaining them. Nevertheless, there are certain steps that could be usefully taken to rationalize and improve the existing machinery even now.

19. The First Committee, which has already moved in the direction of integrating its deliberations on disarmament and international security questions, should take the next step and remove the artificial distinction between its disarmament and international security agendas in terms of both substance and the handling of related resolutions. In the process, the agenda should be consolidated so as to eliminate redundancy. This should result in less time being required for general debate, a reduced number of resolutions and a consequent shortening of the annual sessions of the First Committee.

20. The Disarmament Commission, which is operating under the reform arrangements it adopted in 1991, should have its agenda limited to three items at any time, in order to be able to perform its functions in a deliberate and efficient matter. The utility of the Disarmament Commission should not be measured by the number of items on its agenda but by the substantive value of its product.

21. The Office of Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat has been performing its functions in a most commendable manner, despite the fact that some of its personnel have been detailed elsewhere in the Secretariat. Given the increased workload of that Office resulting from various actions by the General Assembly, in particular the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, its staff should be restored to the full complement that now exists in theory but not in actual fact. Consistent with the emphasis by the Secretary-General on integrating disarmament issues into the broader structure of the international peace and security agenda, this Office should remain, both substantively and in terms of its location, in close touch with other relevant elements of the Secretariat

22. The United States supports the concept of a coordinated system which would allow the international community to address major disarmament issues promptly, flexibly and efficiently. We do not believe, however, that coordination requires the creation of some overall umbrella organization. Rather, as suggested above we should seek better rationalization and greater efficiency of the existing elements of the disarmament machinery. It should also be noted that review of treaties, including bilateral and multilateral arms control and disarmament treaties, is the function of the parties to such treaties and not of an extra-treaty body or organization.

23. As regards the Conference on Disarmament, an autonomous body that emerged from an agreement reached among Member States in 1978, it is currently engaged in a self-generated review, and the status of that review is the subject of a communication from the Conference to the Chairman of the First Committee.

24. In conclusion, the United States would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report and its hope that all other Member States will also find the report to be a most valuable basis for bringing the

approach of the international community to arms control and disarmament into accord with the opportunities and challenges presented by the realities of the post-cold war world.